

24 SEP 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Administration

SUBJECT : Secretarial Survey

I. BACKGROUND:

A. At the CIA Management Committee meeting of 11 September 1975, it was the consensus of the Committee that:

"1. The Agency secretarial pattern system which establishes secretarial grades on the basis of the organizational level and grade of the supervisor's position be continued as a guide in determining pay levels for secretaries. . . ."

"2. An evaluation of secretarial positions be made in all cases to determine if there is a basis for a grade higher than the pattern, based on merit; and, if so, that such grade be approved. It should be recognized that whenever a position is upgraded because of higher level duties and the secretary is promoted, she would be subject to downgrading upon reassignment to a position not having the higher duties. . . . NOTE: As a means of facilitating the review of positions to be conducted by the Office of Personnel, each Career Service will conduct a review and initial screening of positions which may be candidates for upgrading. This review will initially be devoted to senior positions."

B. At a subsequent meeting of the Management Committee during the week of 16 June 1975, "it was concluded that perhaps 'senior secretaries' is a misnomer in terms of adequately defining the many tasks they are called upon to be proficient in, particularly abroad. A new job description or category covering these positions in the Operations Directorate is to be considered. The Director of Personnel will review in conjunction with the DDO Staff and advise."

II. SCOPE:

In response to the Management Committee directives, PMCD reviewed and evaluated those positions which were recommended for upgrading by the Career Services. The positions ranged in grade from GS-07 through GS-10 and totaled 62 in number, Agency-wide. Of these, seven positions were submitted for upgrading consideration by the Offices of the DCI group (two were upgraded with five reaffirmed at their current grade);

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nine positions were submitted by the DDI (one was upgraded and eight were reaffirmed at their current grade level); one position was recommended for upgrading by the DDS&T (this position was reaffirmed at the current grade level). The Operations Directorate submitted a total of forty-five secretarial positions for upgrading. Of these positions, audits confirmed that nine positions, based on their substantive content and the performance of their current incumbents, were somewhat stronger than the others. However, external comparisons do not justify promotions of these secretaries on an incumbency allocation basis. (A list of all positions recommended for upgrading is attached as Appendix "A".)

During the course of the survey, situations were encountered and information developed which expanded the scope of the survey from the review and evaluation of secretarial grades and titles to identification of problems cited by secretaries which are perhaps basically more important, including secretarial utilization, promotion policies, interest in other career fields, recognition, and employee career management and development. Conclusions drawn relating to position grades and titles, employee utilization, promotion policies, and recognition are applicable to secretaries, Agency-wide.

The mechanisms cited herein as currently available within the Agency to cross over into other career fields can be and are utilized by all talented clerical employees, not just secretaries.

III. FINDINGS:

A. Position Titles:

A secretary, by definition, is one who acts as a personal assistant to a supervisor, is flexible and adaptable, and capable of doing what must be done to promote the smooth flow of work into and out of an office. Based on current duties and responsibilities, the positions which were reviewed in this survey fulfill, to a greater or lesser degree, this definition, and are properly titled within the Secretarial Series. It is doubtful that a change in title would serve any useful purpose. In a recent Secretarial Survey at the Department of State, a recommendation to establish an "Executive Secretary" title was shelved because of the difficulty in assigning the title equitably. Additionally, several of the secretaries interviewed in the Department of State survey felt that a title change would be an empty gesture and "an insult to the secretary's intelligence."

B. Position Grades:

Of those positions included in the survey, most were found to be overgraded by one to two grades when evaluated according to Civil Service Commission Standards.

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With regard to the Agency secretarial pattern generally, external comparisons were made with other Federal agencies and with private industry. These comparisons indicate that Agency secretarial grades and salaries are essentially equal to those provided by other agencies and private industry. (Appendix "B") Thus, there appears little justification for upgrading the Agency pattern to provide GS-08, GS-09, and GS-10 grades for secretarial positions which relate to the GS-16 through GS-18 officer levels. Incidentally, such action would result in an additional cost of approximately \$400,000 annually. (Appendix "C") Moreover, as evidenced by two news articles (Appendix "C-1"), there are those who allege that 70% of the secretaries in the Foreign Service and a substantial number in the Navy Department are already overpaid, and suggest the possibility that a recent reclassification program in the Navy, if extended, could affect many of the 38,000-plus secretaries in the government.

With regard to occasional statements that "the Agency is losing its best secretaries because of advancement opportunities on the outside," a review of attrition figures for secretaries in grades GS-07, GS-08, and GS-09 during 1973 and 1974 revealed that of a total of 127 separations, only two were for reasons of advancement. (Appendix "D")

Though all of the secretaries interviewed expressed an interest in having their jobs upgraded, several other comments and complaints suggest deeper problems than position grades. These comments are noted in the following paragraph.

C. Secretarial Comments/Complaints:

1. Under-Utilization:

A primary complaint of every senior secretary interviewed was that of under-utilization, either in her present position or at some point in her career. Each believed that supervisors were not allowing senior secretaries to use initiative nor take on "personal assistant" responsibilities, both of which are requisite to performing as a true secretary. Many noted that their job could be better described as Clerk-Stenographer than Secretary because the supervisor made use of only the clerical skills of the incumbent.

2. Promotion Policies:

a. Rapid Promotions:

Promotion policies which allow a secretary to be promoted to grade GS-07 within as little as two years were roundly criticized by many of the senior secretaries. The view was expressed that there was no feeling of having earned the promotions because they came

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so easily. Those who spoke to this subject said that secretaries become accustomed to rapid promotions, only to be frustrated at the GS-07 level beyond which promotions are extremely limited in the secretarial field.

b. Officer vs. Secretarial Promotions:

In general, both officer and secretarial promotions from Grade GS-07 through GS-11 are made competitively, based on quotas established under the CSGA. However, only those secretaries who have headroom in their current assignment are considered for promotions while headroom in the position is not necessarily required for the promotion of officers. This is viewed as a "discriminatory practice" by secretaries. This matter is examined further in paragraph V, C.

c. Advancement Limitation:

Opportunities for secretarial promotions are extremely limited above grade GS-09. Agency-wide, these opportunities are limited to eleven GS-10 positions and five GS-11 positions, excluding one GS-13 and one GS-12 position located in the DCI's office. Some secretaries expressed the view that they should be provided the opportunity to be promoted at least as high as grade GS-13 as secretaries in positions other than that of secretary to the DCI.

D. Lack of Interest in Other Career Fields:

Although not completely satisfied with the secretarial field, many senior secretaries profess no interest in transferring to other career fields where promotional opportunities are greater. They maintain that they enjoy being secretaries, at least when they are allowed to take on responsibilities commensurate with their grades and experience.

A few of the secretaries objected to the inclusion of their occupation in the group of clerical positions, saying that their career is professional and requires experience, judgment, initiative, and the ability to solve problems. Some acknowledged that their dislike for the term "clerical" stemmed from the fact that their supervisors treated them as office furniture or as persons able only to fetch and carry.

However, one major advantage to the clerical classification as opposed to a professional classification is that the clerical employee falls within the non-exempt category for overtime purposes under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Therefore, under penalty of law, secretaries must be paid for all overtime worked. This results in larger paychecks for most employees in the secretarial field. "Professional" employees are considered exempt under the Act and work extra hours without compensation.

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IV. OTHER CAREER FIELDS AVAILABLE TO SECRETARIES:

In the past two years there has been headway in developing a personnel management structure for the clerical group, particularly for those employees engaged in duties of a secretarial nature. Within the Directorates, 11 offices have secretarial evaluation panels; others are being developed; and the DDO has a Directorate-wide panel stemming from PASG recommendations. There are career counseling services in being for all employees. If a secretary or other clerical employee is interested in being considered for professional employment, mechanisms now exist within the Agency to assist in the accomplishment of that goal.

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Under this a clerical employee who desires professional status (and is sponsored by a Division) is tested, interviewed and evaluated. If the DDO Junior Officer Panel believes that the individual has potential, he/she is accepted as a professional employee and assigned to a professional position, usually as an Intelligence Operations Research Analyst or as a Junior Reports Officer. These two career fields allow progression to the GS-15 level for talented employees. In FY 1975, the Operations Directorate moved 54 employees from secretarial positions into non-secretarial positions leading to professional status.

B. DDI - Advancement Opportunities Program:

This recently initiated program provides for on-the-job training for a person from the clerical ranks in a professional position for a period of one year. If the person works out well in the job, he/she will be permanently assigned as a professional; if not, he/she will be returned to the clerical ranks. Seven secretaries were converted to professionals in FY 1975.

C. DDA:

The DDA has recently assigned a full-time professional officer (DDA Clerical Coordinator) who is charged with developing approaches within the Directorate designed to enhance and upgrade the status of secretaries so as to provide them with career enhancing amenities comparable to those provided professionals.

The Office of Training is examining its supervisory, managerial and clerical courses to include material on improving the supervision and utilization of secretaries.

DDA Career Sub-Groups have no formalized system per se for moving employees from the clerical to the professional ranks. However, personnel are evaluated for potential and counseled to pursue training toward a degree. An effort is also made to assign those who want to change career fields into appropriate positions which provide training for the next higher level position. In FY 1975, the Administration Directorate moved 16 clerical (Secretaries, Clerk-Stenos, Clerk Typists) employees into professional positions.

D. DDS&T:

In the Science and Technology Directorate, 26 employees changed from the clerical to professional category in FY 1975.

V. COURSES OF ACTION AVAILABLE:

There are at least four courses of action available:

A. Arbitrarily upgrade the senior secretarial pattern as follows:

<u>Supervisors Grade</u>	<u>Secretaries Grade</u>
GS-18	GS-10
GS-17	GS-09
GS-16	GS-08

This course of action cannot be supported on the basis of external comparisons nor by position responsibilities. It would be costly and would be susceptible to criticism in light of increased concern of possible overgrading of secretarial positions in other agencies.

B. Upgrade Certain Secretarial Positions on an Incumbency Allocation Basis:

Though there are nine positions in the Operations Directorate that, based on their substantive content and the performance of their current incumbents, are relatively stronger than the others, external comparisons do not support promotion action on an incumbency allocation basis. Such a limited number of upgradings would not have any substantial effect in improving career opportunities in any case.

C. Extend PRA Promotion Policy to Cover Secretaries:

Since a number of secretaries expressed the view that present PRA promotion practices are discriminatory, this appears to be an issue which should be addressed. While the concept of PRA promotions can be questioned generally, the fact remains that the present application of

the concept permits the PRA promotion of officers but excludes secretaries. It must be noted, however, that officers are normally promoted within the CSGA, and thus assignments at the higher grades are available. On the other hand, the promotion of secretaries above the grades of their positions would result in escalation of secretarial grades beyond the available secretarial positions at the higher grades. Ramifications such as this should be thoroughly explored before the concept of PRA promotions is applied to the secretarial group, since current PRA regulations do not contemplate such promotions where higher grade assignments will not be available within a reasonable period. The attrition rate at the senior secretarial level is expectedly low, since secretaries tend to reach the top grades of their profession at a relatively young age -- 20 years or so before retirement. Senior officers look to retirement because of age and the PRA system is therefore workable.

D. Make No Change in the Secretarial Title or Grade Pattern but Seek to Improve Agency Practices Regarding the Utilization, Progression, Recognition, and Career Management and Development of Secretaries:

1. Secretarial Utilization and Advancement Opportunities:

Supervisors must be encouraged to permit secretaries to use their initiative, exercise judgment, and perform more responsible functions within the context of their current assignments. The effect of such enhancement will have on secretarial grades, however, must be recognized as minimal. While a great many senior secretaries expressed little interest in career fields offering greater promotional opportunities, transfer to such other fields offers the only practical solution. Secretaries should be apprised of the limited opportunities that are now, and for the foreseeable future will be, available in the secretarial field. The existing programs that offer qualified secretaries opportunities to move into professional career fields should be expanded. Supervisors should be encouraged to recognize that it is in the Agency's interest to provide such opportunities, even though it means that excellent secretaries may be lost and replacements must be trained.

2. Expansion of Formalized Career Service Management of the Secretarial/Clerical Employee Group:

As expressed elsewhere in this paper, the Agency's Career Services have made headway over the past two years in instituting formalized consideration of certain aspects of career management for the secretarial/clerical employees within their Career Services. There is a clear and definite need for expanded programs to assist talented and ambitious secretaries to expand their potential fully, to increase career opportunities, enrich their job environment and to allow the

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Agency to take full advantage of existing personnel resources. Secretaries comprise a significant and essential segment of our total work force and the Agency, through its Career Services and Sub-Services, must be actively concerned with their interests and morale to the same attentive degree directed to the needs of professional personnel. The secretarial "problem" is multi-faceted and will not be solved by title changes, position upgrading or token actions. The decision has been made that employee career management should be decentralized and administered on a Career Service basis. It is incumbent, therefore, on each Career Service to fully formalize procedures for the career management of secretaries. The Office of Personnel and OMS/PSS could be tasked to assist the Career Services in the development of procedures as appropriate to meet the particular needs of the secretarial group.

F. W. M. Janney
Director of Personnel

Atts.
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